

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CANDIDATES FOR LEADERSHIP OF QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY

REF: MONTREAL 0054

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: CLAUDE RYAN, PUBLISHER OF LE DEVOIR, AND RAYMOND GARNEAU, FORMER PROVINCIAL FINANCE MINISTER, HAVE OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THEIR CANDIDACIES FOR LEADERSHIP OF QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY. WHILE THERE ARE OTHER POTENTIAL CANDIDATES, WE SUSPECT THAT CANDIDACY OF RYAN WILL DISCOURAGE OTHERS FROM ENTERING RACE, WHICH WILL BE DECIDED AT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE APRIL 14. BOTH RYAN AND GARNEAU ARE CONSERVATIVE IN OUTLOOK, BUT PRESENT DIFFERENCES IN STYLE, SUPPORT, AND PHILOSOPHY WHICH WILL PROVIDE CHOICE FOR QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY. MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES WILL PROBABLY BE FOUND IN AREAS OF ECONOMIC POLICY AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, WITH GARNEAU MORE ORIENTED TOWARD STATUS QUO. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF RYAN SHOULD SERVE TO REVITALIZE QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY AND FORCE REASONED EXAMINATION OF QUEBEC'S PROBLEMS AND ITS PLACE WITHIN A FUTURE CANADA. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN NEW CONFERENCE LATE YESTERDAY, CLAUDE RYAN OFFICIALLY DECLARED HIS CANDIDACY FOR LEADERSHIP OF QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY. SHOULD HE BECOME LEADER, RYAN SAID THAT HIS FIRST GOALS WOULD BE TO REBUILD LIBERAL PARTY BOTH TO MAKE IT MORE VITAL AND DEMOCRATIC, AND TO INCREASE INTELLECTUAL INPUT INTO PARTY DELIBERATIONS AND PROGRAMS. RYAN SAID THAT PREPARATIONS WOULD BEGIN IN NEAR FUTURE FOR THE REFERENDUM BATTLE AND WOULD INCLUDE AN

HONEST AND REALISTIC EXAMINATION OF BENEFITS OF PRESENT FEDERAL SYSTEM; RENEWED EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE PRO-CANADA FORCES AND TO ASSERT LEADERSHIP OF QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY IN THIS TASK; AND PREPARATION OF SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO MODIFY CANADIAN FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

3. RYAN THUS JOINS FORMER PROVINCIAL FINANCE MINISTER RAYMOND GARNEAU, WHO DECLARED HIS CANDIDACY MONDAY, IN BATTLE FOR LEADERSHIP OF PROVINCIAL LIBERALS. STILL ON FENCE AS POTENTIAL CANDIDATES ARE INTERIM LEADER GERARD LEVESQUE, AND FORMER BOURASSA CABINET MINISTER, JAN-PAUL L'ALLIER. MOREOVER, PROMINENT GROUP OF PROVINCIAL LIBERALS IS STILL REPORTED TO BE ENCOURAGING FEDERAL FINANCE MINISTER JEAN CHRETIEN TO RUN. CP REPORT THIS MORNING SAID THAT GERARD LEVESQUE HAD DECIDED NOT TO BECOME CANDIDATE, BUT SPOKESMAN FOR LEVESQUE SAID LATER THAT REPORT WAS ONLY A RUMOR. SIMILARLY, L'ALLIER DENIED REPORTS THAT HE HAD OFFERED HIS SUPPORT TO RYAN. STATING THAT HE WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH CANDIDACIES OF EITHER RYAN OR GARNEAU, L'ALLIER SAID THAT HE WOULD MAKE HIS OWN DECISION SOON. CANDIDATES HAVE UNTIL MARCH 16 TO DECLARE; VOTING WILL TAKE PLACE AT LEADERSHIP CONVENTION APRIL 14-15 IN QUEBEC CITY.

4. COMMENT: WITH RYAN AND GARNEAU NOW BOTH IN RACE AS STRONG CANDIDATES, WE WOULD EXPECT OTHER POTENTIAL CANDIDATES TO BE RELUCTANT TO ENTER FRAY. WHILE SOME MAY SEE GARNEAU AND RYAN AS CUT FROM SAME BASIC CONSERVATIVE CLOTH, THERE ARE ENOUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIFFERENCES TO PROVIDE CHOICE FOR QUEBEC'S LIBERALS. IN STYLE, RYAN IS DELIBERATE, INTELLECTUAL, ALOOF; GARNEAU IS MORE SCINTILLATING, COMBATTIVE, SLICK. IN CONTRAST TO RYAN'S EXALTED REPUTATION AS INTELLECTUAL, GARNEAU IS SEEN BY SOME AS INTELLECTUAL LIGHTWEIGHT. IN TERMS OF SUPPORT, GARNEAU HAS NEVER HAD GREAT FOLLOWING IN MONTREAL, WHERE RYAN CAN EXPECT TO RUN STRONGEST. GARNEAU DOES, HOWEVER, HAVE SUPPORT IN QUEBEC CITY REGION AND OTHER AREAS OF PROVINCE, PRESENTING QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY AGAIN WITH TRADITIONAL DIVISION OF PROVINCE AGAINST CITY OF MONTREAL. SURPRISINGLY, WHILE GARNEAU HAS BEEN LOYAL PARTY WORKER, HE HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR NOT HAVING STRONG BASE OF SUPPORT WITHIN PARTY, A FACTOR WHICH MAY MAKE ACCESS EASIER FOR RYAN, WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MEMBER OF LIBERAL PARTY.

5. MAIN POLICY DIFFERENCES, WE EXPECT, WILL OCCUR IN AREAS OF ECONOMIC POLICY AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. WHILE NEITHER ESPOUSES INCREASED POWER FOR STATE, RYAN APPEARS MORE WILLING TO RECOGNIZE NEED FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN SOME AREAS THAN DOES GARNEAU. AT TIME OF NOVEMBER POLICY CONFERENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, RYAN MADE IT KNOWN THAT HE WAS UNHAPPY WITH RIGID ECONOMIC POLICIES PRONOTED BY PARTY. OF MOST IMPORTANCE FOR CANADA, HOWEVER, WILL BE CONCEPTIONS OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. BOTH RECOGNIZE NEED

FOR CHANGE, BUT GARNEAU'S RENEWED FEDERALISM REMAINS CLOSE TO STATUS QUO. RYAN, BY CONTRAST, IS KNOWN TO FAVOR REAL THIRD OPTION, WITHIN A FEDERAL FRAMEWORK, THAT RECOGNIZES QUEBEC AS DISTINCTIVE NATIONAL ENTITY WITHIN CANADA, AND PERHAPS EVOLVING INTO A CANADA COMPOSED OF FIVE REGIONS: BRITISH COLOMBIA, PRAIRIE PROVINCES, ONTARIO, QUEBEC, AND MARITIMES.

6. WHILE RYAN'S DEPARTURE FROM LE DEVOIR, WHERE HE SERVED SO WELL AS A CATALYST FOR THE PROVINCE'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSCIENCE, WILL BE A LOSS, HIS CANDIDACY, BUTTRESSED BY HIS INTENSE INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE, SHOULD FORCE A REASONED EXAMINATION F QUEBEC'S PROBLEMS AND THE MEANS BY WHICH QUEBEC'S DISQUIETUDE COULD BE ANSWERED WITHIN A CONFEDERATION.

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